May a Woman Choose a Righteous Husband for Herself?

Imām ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbdillāh b. Bāz

Question:

How should a Muslim woman who observes the Islamic covering [*Ḥijāb*] and believes in Allāh choose her prospective husband? What qualities should he possess? Please clarify these qualities for us, may Allāh reward you with goodness.

Answer:

She should seek a righteous man who is known for goodness, diligently observes the prayers [*aṣ-Ṣalawāt*], and possesses a sound creed [*ʿAqīdah*]. If he proposes marriage to her, she should make inquiries about him among trustworthy people whom she knows and who are acquainted with him. There is likewise no harm if she herself proposes marriage to him. If she knows him to be a man of goodness and uprightness [*Istiqāmah*], and asks her legal guardian [*Walī*], or someone other than her

guardian, to approach him on her behalf and convey that she would accept a marriage proposal [*Khiṭbah*] from him, there is no harm in that.

A woman offered herself in marriage to the Prophet ﷺ, and he ﷺ approved of her doing so. When he ﷺ did not wish to marry her, he gave her in marriage to another man.
ʿUmar {رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْه} offered his daughter Ḥafṣah in marriage to Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq and to ʿUthmān after her husband's death had left her widowed. The Prophet ﷺ then married her.

The intended point is that there is no objection to a woman choosing for herself a righteous man who is known for uprightness in his religion. She may not, however, finalize the matter except through her guardian, for her guardian is the one who concludes her marriage contract. If she and her guardian agree upon a righteous man, that is the desired course. Her guardian has no right to compel her to marry a man who is not righteous or a man whom she does not wish to marry. She, for her part, must not choose a man whose selection would harm her guardians [*Awliyāʾ*] and cause discord between her and them. She should proceed by proper means and choose a righteous man whose selection would cause neither problems nor harm to her guardians.

Source: binbaz.org.sa | *Ṣifāt az-Zawj aṣ-Ṣāliḥ* | *Nūr ʿAlá ad-Darb*